

Under Fire

By RICHARD PARKER

Based on the drama of
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of "It Pays to Advertise"

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SYNOPSIS.

—13—
The chief characters are Ethel Wiloughby, Henry Streetman and Capt. Larry Redmond. The minor characters are Sir George Wagstaff of the British admiralty and Charlie Brown, a New York newspaper correspondent. Ethel, a resident of Sir George's household, secretly married to Streetman, a German spy, though she did not know him as such. Captain Redmond, her old lover, returns to England after long absence. From him she learns the truth about Streetman; furthermore, that he has betrayed her simply to learn naval secrets. The European war breaks out. Ethel prepares to accompany Streetman to Brussels as a German spy in order to get revenge and serve England. Captain Redmond, Ethel and Charlie Brown turn up at a Belgian inn as the German army comes. She is Madame de Lorde. She begins to work with a French spy. The Germans appear at the inn. Madame de Lorde shows a German secret service medal and convinces the invaders that she is a German spy. Charlie Brown barely escapes execution. The secret telephone is discovered and Christophe is shot as a spy. Brown is ordered back to Brussels.

CHAPTER XVII—Continued.

"Say good-by to old Christophe for me!" he enjoined them. "Tell him I'm sorry I didn't get his chicken dinner, but better luck next time!" He held his hand out to the major. But hand-shaking fell outside German military etiquette. Major von Brenig saluted.

"I may warn you," Major von Brenig cautioned the American, "I may warn you that if you are found off the road to Brussels the consequences will be serious."

"In fact, you will be shot, my friend," Streetman said, to make the matter entirely clear. And he appeared not at all uneasy over the contingency. In fact, he impressed Charlie Brown as being irritatingly cheerful.

"I know you hope for the best," Brown told him. He could not deny himself that passing retort. "But don't worry," he told the major. "I won't miss Brussels road. And, Streetman, if you ever come to America, look me up! I'll give you one good time!"

"I fear he will never get to Brussels," von Brenig said somewhat pensively, after Charlie had gone. Certainly he wished the American no ill luck. But he knew that not all officers whom he might meet would prove to be Columbia men.

"It is his own risk," Streetman said. "He did not have to come here. Now, major, there may be other spies. Would it not be best to replace the telephone and put a secret guard around this room? Then if anyone else comes to the telephone, we shall know."

The scheme appealed to Major von Brenig. Accordingly, they had ordered the man Otto to return the instrument to its hiding place. And stationing others where they might keep watch of the fireplace, and yet not be seen by anyone who entered the room, they instructed Lieutenant Baum to arrest the first person who approached the telephone.

"Report to me at once, in such an event," the major said.

"If necessary, shoot before any message can be sent," Streetman told him.

The man from the Wilhelmstrasse then hurried away to see General Freund, promising to return to join the major and Captain Karl at dinner.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Death Hovers Near Ethel.

Ever since she succeeded in inveigling Lieutenant Baum into revealing to her the secret of the fork in the road, Ethel had waited her opportunity to telephone the news to the French front. It seemed to her that the German intruders would never leave the public room, even for five minutes. Meanwhile she had hovered near. And at last she was convinced that the coast was clear.

Cautiously she opened the door and peered inside. She saw no one. So she stepped into the room. For just a few moments she hesitated, to assure herself that there was a lull in the movements of the enemy. Apparently they had withdrawn to spruce themselves up after their long march.

She nervously to her task. She stole to the fireplace, glanced over her shoulder for one last hurried survey of the room, and reached her hand out for the instrument. She had barely taken it up when she heard the command—

"Halt!"

Ethel turned. To her startled eyes the room seemed suddenly full of soldiers. And giving a little cry, she

dropped the telephone upon the floor.

Lieutenant Baum confronted her sternly.

"You are a spy for the French!" he said.

"No, no! Let me explain!"

He ignored her protest.

"Load!" He snapped out the order to his men. And as they obeyed Ethel

cried:

"No, no, no! For God's sake don't shoot me like that!" Trembling, she stood there, while they covered her with their rifles.

Then another cry of "Halt!" rang out. This time the command came from the doorway. It was Larry Redmond who interrupted the grim business.

Lieutenant Baum turned to him in surprise, while the German soldiers lowered their guns and saluted.

"What are you doing?" Larry demanded.

"A spy for the French!" Baum explained somewhat peevishly.

"A spy for the French, eh?" Larry said as he drew nearer. "Frau—"

he began. And then he stopped short. He had not recognized Ethel at first, for her back was toward the door.

But now they gazed at each other in amazement. "A spy, eh?" Larry repeated. "What makes you think so?"

"She went to use that telephone. It leads to the French," the lieutenant said.

"Excellent, excellent!" Larry told him. "But—I shall investigate this matter."

"But Major von Brenig—" Baum began.

Larry brought him up sharply.

"I am your superior officer!" he reminded the lieutenant. And at that the other saluted. "In ten minutes," Larry continued, "you will report to Major von Brenig that you captured the spy—that she is here in my charge, and will be kind enough to come here directly."

"Yes, Herr Captain!"

"In ten minutes, lieutenant! . . . It is for the fatherland!"

"Ten minutes!" Baum replied. And once more he saluted.

At a sign from Baum the soldiers withdrew, with the lieutenant leading the way.

Larry waited till the last man was out of the room and the doors had closed behind them. Then he sprang to Ethel's side.

"Ethel! They caught you at the telephone?" he cried.

"Yes!" That was all she could say, as she faced him pitifully.

"Then they knew; and 'twas a trap set for you?"

"Oh, Larry, what will happen to me?"

He tried to calm her fears.

"There, there, my darling—no more harm shall come to you!"

Already his active mind was formulating a plan for her relief.

"But what are we to do?" she asked. She felt helpless, incompetent to act, to devise any means for saving herself from the fate that hung over her.

"Now, my dear, since they know you're a spy there's no great chance for you to escape through their lines," he said. "So for the moment, go into that room—" he pointed out a door to her—"go in there, lock the door, and when they come back I'll do the best I can with a bit of explainin'."

"Come!" . . . He started for the door of the room where he meant to hide her, when his foot caught on something—it was the padlock that was pushed through the hasp of the trapdoor of the wine cellar—and he tripped and all but fell "Sure, trippin' a bad sign," he exclaimed. "I'll not be married this year. I—" He paused as a thought struck him—an inspiration, it seemed. And for a brief instant he looked down at the contrivance at his feet.

"What is it?" Ethel inquired.

"My dear, the wine cellar—quick! It's a great chance!"

"What do you mean?" she asked wonderingly. He had already pulled up the trapdoor. The padlock had not been closed. "You want to hide me there?"

Somehow, she shrank from the thought of descending into that dark hole. It seemed to her that once she sought that shelter they would surely find her in the end.

"No, no! 'Twould be the first place they'd search," he replied. He pulled a flashlight from his pocket and crept down the steps as he talked. "Wait!" he said. And in another moment he had so placed the light at the foot of the stairs that its beams shot upward through the opening. "That's it, that's it!" he exclaimed delightedly. He was still standing upon the cellar floor.

"The light's shining in your face! Look! Can you see me?" he asked.

"No, no! The light blinds me. I can't see you at all!" she told him.

He came up quickly then.

"Good—good! Now listen! . . . If somebody peeked down there, wouldn't they think a desperate woman was standing at the foot of these stairs waitin' to shoot the first man who tried to come down?"

Ethel stood there in the glare of the flashlight had listened to his plans.

"Yes—yes—I believe they would," she admitted, beginning to understand his scheme.

"And that's what we've got to make them believe. Now, hasten, darlin'—"

hasten! . . . 'Tis best here!" He

led her behind the cigar counter, for he had suddenly abandoned his previous notion of concealing her in the adjoining room. "Go and hide!" he directed. And she crouched low in the shadow of the counter. "Ah! God is good to the Irish!" he exulted. "Have you a revolver?"

"Yes, Larry!"—She produced a small, nicked weapon.

He took it from her.

"'Tis rather a toy," he said. "But I suppose it will shoot. Then don't let the sound of a shot frighten you into screaming. I've got to give myself a bit of a flesh wound just in the hand."

"No, no!" she exclaimed in increased alarm.

"With this it can be only a scratch," he said. "As soon as I shoot, duck and hide. . . . Now, here goes!"

He shot himself in the right hand, then handed the revolver back to Ethel, who immediately buddled behind the counter. Then Larry banged the trapdoor shut. And backing away from it, he waited for the men who as he knew would soon come running in.

In another moment they burst upon him.

"Herr captain—you are wounded!" Lieutenant Baum cried.

"'Tis nothing," Larry replied. And he proceeded to bandage his bloody hand with a handkerchief.

Others joined the startled knot of Germans—among the newcomers, Major von Brenig.

"The spy—the woman spy—where is she?" he asked.

Larry told him that the woman had escaped.

The major swore roundly at that.

And then Larry explained that she had suddenly produced a revolver and shot him. "Before I could draw my own revolver she'd got away," he said. "She raised the trapdoor and went down there," he continued, pointing to the floor.

The major remembered that there was no outlet to the wine cellar. And

Streetman wheeled about in amazement.

without hesitation he raised the trapdoor, to face a blinding burst of light. He backed away quickly.

"What the devil!" he shouted.

And at the same time Larry warned him to be careful.

"She must have one of our pocket flashlights," he said. "What a target it made of you, major! And in the dark you could not see her, could you?"

"No!" von Brenig admitted. "And she can pick off our men one by one as they go down unless we rush her."

Larry closed the door quickly.

"If I may make so bold as to suggest—" he began; and seeing that the major gave him permission to continue, he said, "If there is no way out of the cellar save that, why waste our men when all we need is to leave her there to starve—till there's no light in her?"

"Why not leave her there forever?" von Brenig asked. He was, above everything, a practical man.

"'Tis better still—'tis a just fate for a spy," Larry agreed.

"Baum—run a bayonet through the hasp!" the major ordered. The padlock had fallen into the cellar unheeded when Larry first opened the trap.

"Later you will make the fastening permanent," von Brenig said.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Surprise for Streetman.

Well satisfied at the happy termination of the episode, the major and his men retired once more. And Larry now found himself alone in the room, except for a telephone sergeant who stationed himself at the field instrument which he had placed upon a table when the Germans first reached the Lion d'Or. At least, there were no others present so far as the sergeant knew. In their consuming interest in that trapdoor, not one of the invaders had noticed Ethel as she crouched behind the cigar counter.

Ordered by Larry to leave, the sergeant explained that Major von Brenig was expecting a message.

"Come back in fifteen minutes," Larry ordered. "I will take any messages."

The fellow had no sooner gone than Larry started for the cigar counter.

"Well, my darlin', so far so good!" he said in a low voice. And then to his dismay he heard someone at the street door. "Ssh! Don't get up yet! Someone is coming!" Larry warned the girl.

To his immense alarm and consternation, as the door swung open he saw that this latest arrival was no other than Henry Streetman.

They saluted. And as a wave of recognition swept across Streetman's face he whipped out his revolver and cried, "Halt!"

"What the devil do you mean?" Larry cried.

Streetman regarded him coolly.

"Well, Captain Redmond!" he said. "Well, Herr Strassman!"

"We meet under somewhat different circumstances from that night in the moonlight on Unter den Linden," Streetman observed.

"Yes, quite different!" was the almost jaunty response.

"Then you were in the English army. Now, Captain Redmond, you wear a German uniform."

"And 'tis a good fit, too, for German clothes," Larry replied.

But the other was in no good mood for banter.

"That night I gave you your life," he proceeded. "Now I must take it back again. Before I call my men have you anything to say?"

"Not a word!" Larry defied him.

"You have no message to send—the girl you told me of?"

"I believe she can hear me when I say that I love her and pray the good God to keep her safe and free from harm," the Irishman told him in all truth. He was serious now, was Captain Redmond. Indeed, he saw that he was in a devilish tight hole. And rack his brains as he would, he could think of no way out.

Larry was right. The girl he loved did hear him. Before Streetman had said another word, Ethel leaped from behind the cigar counter with her revolver leveled at Streetman.

"Hands up! Hands up—or I'll kill you!" she cried.

Streetman wheeled about in amazement. And before he could collect his scattered wits Captain Redmond had scattered the German spy's revolver from him.

"Ethel, my dear, you shouldn't have mixed up in this," Larry reproved her. Streetman heard him with increasing wonder.

"My dear!" he repeated after Larry.

"Then you know Captain Redmond?" he exclaimed, searching Ethel's face for the information he only now began to suspect.

"I do," she told him unflinchingly.

He saw everything clearly at last.

"Then, by God! You're the Englishman she loved!" he exclaimed as he turned to Larry.

Ethel did not wait for Captain Redmond to answer.

"Yes, yes, I love him!" she confessed shamelessly. "I've always loved him."

"Then you lied to me when you said you hated him," Streetman accused her. "You lied when you said you wanted to work against the English—you lied!" He was like a madman, as he realized how she had tricked him.

"I lied—yes!" she confessed. "I lied, too, when I said the English fleet had dispersed. It hadn't. It went to the Kiel canal. I've lied to you every minute—every minute since we left for Brussels."

"You said the man you married was a German spy—" Larry reminded Ethel. "But you can't be her husband," he told Streetman. "I met your wife in Berlin."

Streetman sneered.

"Her husband? . . . So that's what she told you! That's good!" He even laughed at the thought, in spite of the menacing revolver that Captain Redmond pointed at him.

"Henry! Henry!" Ethel's boldness had forsaken her now.

She could not bear to hear such things said—and before Larry, of all men.

"I don't understand," Captain Redmond said slowly.

"Then let me explain—since you and she are in love. It may be of some interest for you to know, Captain Redmond," Streetman could scarcely have prayed for more complete revenge than this.

"Oh, don't! Don't!" Ethel entreated. But Streetman continued ruthlessly.

"This lady," he said, "this lady has the honor to be—"

"Don't say it, you dog!" Larry warned him. And his finger curled caressingly about the trigger of the revolver.

"No, no! It isn't true! Don't believe him!" Ethel urged. "I thought I was married honestly—truly married. . . . I loathe him. I despise him. . . . You do believe me? Oh, say that you do—please!"

"Of course, my dear, I love you!" Larry said quietly, as if that were reason enough—and more—for his complete trust in her.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of Sunday School Course, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)
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LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 5.

SHIPWRECKED AT MELITA (Malta)

LESSON TEXT—Acts 27:38-28:10.
GOLDEN TEXT—Jehovah redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that take refuge in him shall be condemned.—Ps. 34:22.

Paul was at Malta three months, from the last of November to the last of February, A. D. 59. A bay on the north shore is still called St. Paul's bay. Much help on this lesson can be secured by reading Mr. James Smith's book on the "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul," Sir William Ramsey's, "St. Paul, the Traveler," and "Everyday Men," by Robert Elliott Thompson.

I. Paul safely ashore (27:38-44). As the day dawned the ship was lightened for a third time to enable them to approach nearer to the shore. This time the main cargo of wheat was thrown out, heretofore having been saved as long as possible. The sailors were familiar with Malta, but not with this part where the ship now lay. Discovering a small creek, they perceived a certain bay with a beach upon which they might run the ship, and hold it without its going to pieces before they could land. It would have been impossible to escape if they ran upon the rocks in a heavy sea. The words "taken up anchor" (v. 40) indicates that the sailors had cast them overboard, but attached to the ship. Now they cut the cables and permitted themselves not to be anchored but to blow with the storm that they might land upon the beach. Approaching the inlet, where the waters of the bay met that of the sea, "where the two seas met," the vessel would not answer to its helm. The ship probably drew about 18 feet of water, and the bottom stuck in the clinging mud and clay, and the forepart began to break away from the rear, due to the violence of the waves. Here Paul had his most narrow escape (v. 42). Not alone was he on the point of losing his life by the sea, but the sword hung over his head, not that of a lawful executioner, but of a selfish murderer.

Before it was danger from the sailors; now it is the soldiers, but the centurion proved true, and all of the prisoners were saved for Paul's sake. It would be interesting speculation as to how many of those saved realized that they were not for Paul's sake, but for the sake of his Savior, and how many of them were duly grateful. On this second stage of the journey, after having left Caesarea with the larger ship, there were probably 276 persons, by God's guaranty was "there shall be no loss of any man's life," and his word is sure.

II. Paul's continued service (28:1-10). This island is today and has been since 1800 under British rule. It was then governed by the Romans. (1) Comfort (vv. 1, 2). The term "barbarian" does not indicate rudeness or uncivilized people, but merely those of non-Greek birth. These people kindled a fire because of the cold and of the rain. They received everyone, prisoners and soldiers like brothers, and, in the persons of Paul and Luke, they certainly entertained angels unawares. (Heb. 13:2). (2) Co-operation (v. 3): The fire would need continual replenishing. Again Paul's energy is conspicuous. Though the greatest of men then living, he was ready to do the humblest duty. Whether counseling about a difficulty or comforting under dangers, he was ready to relieve distress at all times, and thus held up the banner of the cross and proved his Christian spirit.

As Paul gathered the roots and put them upon the fire there came out a viper, probably benumbed by the cold, which fastened itself upon his hand. There are now no venomous serpents in Malta, but this is no reason to believe that in the earlier days, when sparsely inhabited, this common European serpent, known as the viper, or possibly the Egyptian asp, may not have been here. It was natural for superstitious nations to expect that this was the vengeance of a god brought upon Paul because no doubt he was a murderer. Having escaped from the wreck, Paul could not escape from the sword of divine justice, and the goddess of justice, Nemesis, the avenger, suffered him not to live. With perfect composure, doubtless arising from God's promises that Christ had made to his servants (Mark 16:18; Luke 10:19), and also the promises that he should preach the gospel in Rome, Paul shook the viper from his wrist. They then changed their minds, thinking that he must be a god (see Acts 14:19).